

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES

*This section reviews the projected status of community facilities during the planning period. This includes the Lincoln City Libraries, public safety (fire services and law enforcement), medical health care, and public buildings and facilities.*

## **G**UIDING PRINCIPLES

Public buildings and structures should be well built, functional, and designed to blend attractively within the context of surrounding development or to serve as a guide for future development or redevelopment.

Public art is an important means by which the community can strengthen a sense of place and promote a positive image.

Libraries are important centers of activity and education, and should grow along with the community while keeping their center in downtown.

As the community grows, law enforcement and fire services must be able to respond to changing needs in order to provide public safety services.

Future public buildings should be designed, built, and maintained to ensure good indoor air quality to help protect the public's health.

## **STRATEGIES**

- The Urban Design Committee should serve as an advisory board on the design of city buildings and other public projects, major public/private developments, and any private projects constructed on city right of way or other city property.
- Part of the conceptualization and design of any major public construction should be an investigation of the possibility for inclusion of public art.
- The main branch of the library should remain in the downtown area.
- Lincoln Fire Department should continue to identify needed fire facilities that will allow them to maintain a response time of 3.5 minutes or less to any area of the city.
- The location of public buildings should support the policies of the Comprehensive Plan
- The City's government center must remain Downtown. All efforts should be made to locate local, state, and federal offices Downtown when expansions and relocations are considered.

## URBAN DESIGN

City government uses the volunteer advisory services of an Urban Design Committee (UDC). This is a group of design professionals and interested citizens appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council. The Committee is charged with advising the Mayor, City Council, Planning Commission, city boards, and city departments on the design of city buildings and other public projects, major public/private developments, and any private projects constructed on city right of way or other city property. The Committee's intent is to make sure that new public facilities are exemplary – that they provide functional and aesthetically pleasing facilities for the public, and model good design for the private sector. The ~~Committee~~ <sup>Commission</sup> also works to publicize and reward good design, private as well as public, through an annual awards program.

The benefits of this free advice would be strengthened by including all public projects under UDC review, just as the Environs Commission reviews projects of all local and state governmental units. LES has brought projects to UDC, and Lincoln Public Schools has used the committee's input on siting communication towers. But the Public Building Commission, which provides facilities for City and County government, does not currently benefit by UDC review, although it is the major developer of local government buildings. Lancaster County, the Railroad Safety Transportation District, the Airport Authority, and other units of local government could all utilize this experienced volunteer board.

## PUBLIC ART

Cities ~~also~~ can strengthen their sense of place and positive image through promotion of artworks in public places. The Lincoln Arts Council demonstrated the power of public art through its invigorating "Tour de Lincoln" project and is promoting a downtown "art corridor" on 12th Street. The Arts Council may expand its activities in the future to assist with public art plans for downtown, Antelope Valley, and the city's key entryways.

Lincoln ~~also~~ would improve the design of its public buildings and facilities, and expand its inventory of public artworks, by an early integration of the efforts of artists with architects and engineers on future projects. Cities like Seattle and Phoenix are more interesting places, with a stronger sense of local pride and identity, as a result of their efforts to integrate art in the design of many public construction projects. In the past, most public facilities in Lincoln were have been designed without opportunities for artistic expression, or with art added only as an afterthought. Local government should include artists on the design teams for major construction projects from the conceptual stage, and budget to incorporate artistic expression. The Antelope Valley Redevelopment Plan has accomplished this by including the integration of public art as an important component in the planning and design of public structures in the project area.

# LINCOLN CITY LIBRARIES

As the Lincoln City Libraries plan the delivery of information services to the community, it is guided by three principles. First is the mission which has been established for the library system. Second – given that information delivery is so closely tied to information technology – is the state of technology when the demands of the community require an expanded system. Third is the geographic and population size of the community, as well as its physical layout, which are critical to planning library services.

Library services, similar to many other public services, must be provided to the “built community” regardless of how the community grows. Library planners will be carefully observing patterns of growth and development within the community. The intent will be to provide balanced, accessible service to the entire community. Neighborhood and Downtown development, transportation corridors, public school patterns, and the plans of agencies and services with which the public library system might develop partnerships will all be critical to the way in which library services will be provided for Lincoln in the next twenty-five years.

There should be an electronic library initiative among UNL, LPS, other school districts and public libraries in the County and Lincoln City Libraries to establish mutual access via the Internet to digital library assets.

Downtown is the heart of our community, and strong community facilities are essential to maintaining downtown vitality. The Downtown Master Plan has identified the importance of maintaining the location of the main library in the downtown area. ~~The main library should remain downtown, where it is pedestrian and transit accessible, serving and linking downtown’s housing, education, government, offices and commerce communities. Keeping the main library downtown is important not only for downtown, but for the surrounding historic neighborhoods and the city as a whole.~~ Any future renovation and/or relocation plans must involve sites that maintain or augment pedestrian and mass transit accessibility and continue the main library’s role as a core community facility in traditional geographic downtown.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

### FIRE PROTECTION

#### *Lincoln Fire Department*

The Lincoln Fire Department anticipates the need for additional fire stations to service the City’s projected expansion during the 25 year planning period.

These new stations would house a variety of “Fire and Rescue” and “Emergency Medical” units. In general the new facilities would be placed in growth areas to the north, east, southeast, south, and southwest. No specific locations have been identified for these possible stations in the Comprehensive Plan. The Department also routinely monitors the response time of all existing stations. Changing development patterns or other conditions may warrant the relocation of these stations. ~~The relocation of Station No. 11 — currently located in Lincoln Air Park West — to a site closer to the Arnold Heights neighborhood is being considered to enhance the response time to the area.~~

#### *Rural Fire Districts*

The 17 rural volunteer fire departments will continue to see increasing challenges. As growing population in the small towns, villages, and rural areas, as well as increased traffic, will continue to create demands for fire and emergency services. The physical growth of the City of Lincoln will cause changes to the character of some areas

and to the tax base of many districts. An expansion of the requirements to meet the evolving fire needs in the rural areas, such as fire ponds and dry hydrants, should be investigated.

### *Law Enforcement*

The Lincoln Police Department and Lancaster County Sheriff's Office are anticipated to remain as the sole providers of law enforcement services to the city and county during the planning period. The Sheriff's Office will continue to provide contract law enforcement support to the various incorporated towns of the county. The overall increase in population in the city and county will increase the demand for police and sheriff services in the urban, small town, and rural areas.

The opening of the "Hall of Justice and Law Enforcement Center" in the year 2000 placed both operations within a single facility. This renovated facility at 575 South 10th Street in Lincoln is an example of the cooperation exhibited by the city and county in furthering the efficient delivery of governmental services to the community. Substations/reporting stations serve as satellite locations in neighborhoods to increase law enforcement visibility in areas where the need is greatest. While future expansion, relocations, or facility rehabilitation to support law enforcement efforts could occur during the 25 year planning period, none are known at this time.

## **M**EDICAL HEALTH CARE

Currently, Bryan LGH West and St. Elizabeth's Hospitals are undergoing significant expansions. The Bryan LGH East campus and Madonna Rehabilitation hospitals also recently underwent major renovations and construction as well. These four campuses, located near existing residential neighborhoods are expected to remain the vital core to health care services in the county and region. It is important to Lancaster County citizens and other surrounding areas to develop Lincoln as a major network of quality regional health care services at reasonable costs.

Hospitals represent one of the highest and most important community service land uses. Further construction on these campuses in the future is likely. Any hospital expansion will need to take into consideration the impact on the adjacent neighborhoods. Hospitals are planning on using parking garages and multi-story construction in order to maximize the use of the land.

The Veterans' Medical Center at 600 South 70th Street was established in 1930. For over seven decades the handsome complex of Colonial style buildings has served veterans throughout the region. The buildings and grounds are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The site is an important part of the history of Lincoln and Lancaster County.

The Veterans' Center faces an uncertain future. If the federal government deems that its current hospital use is to be discontinued, then any redevelopment of the site (including the site of the former existing residence on the grounds) should be done in a manner that respects the character of the historic property and adjacent neighborhood.

Another major factor in health care is the expansion of medical office space throughout Lincoln. Recently, new medical office buildings have been constructed in both the southern and northern portions of the city. This trend is likely to continue into the immediate future as the demand for health care services increases as a result of the community's growing and aging population base.

The Community Mental Health Center of Lancaster County (CMHC) operates from multiple service sites around Lincoln, serving mental health needs of persons in Lancaster County. The Crisis Center Program serves all of Southeast Nebraska for emergency protective custody evaluations out of the main site at 2200 St. Mary's Avenue. Continued population increases in Lancaster County and Southeast Nebraska have meant increased demand for mental health services provided both at the main facility and in program satellites.

## OTHER PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

During the time period covered by this Plan, there will likely be a need to construct, renovate, or abandon certain public buildings and facilities not already discussed in this document. At such time as these events may occur, care should be taken by those public officials making these decisions that the Vision of this Plan is recognized and respected. This may include the siting of a new facility, the abandonment of an existing one, the way renovations are undertaken, the manner of financing used to complete the work, the arrangements made for the facility's operation, the process followed in making the decision, and the timing of the action.

Of particular note to local government operations is the Lincoln-Lancaster County Public Building Commission. This entity was established in 1991 to oversee any buildings, structures, or facilities used jointly by the City and County for a public purpose. The Commission consists of five members – two from the City Council, two from the County Board, and a fifth member chosen by the other four members. The Commission currently has responsibility for eleven buildings:

- ~~Old Federal Building~~
- ~~LPD Building (a.k.a., “233 South 10<sup>th</sup> St. Building”)~~
- Hall of Justice
- K Street Complex
- City-County Health Department
- Northeast Senior Center
- Health Annex
- County-City Building
- Election Office Building
- Downtown Senior Center
- LPD North Station

~~The only immediate plan for new facilities is the construction of a parking facility to service the County-City/Hall of Justice complex in Downtown Lincoln. The facility is anticipated to be located immediately north of the County-City Building on Block 101 (9th to 10th Streets, K to L Streets).~~